

CITY MOPS UP FOLLOWING STORM

The Only Paper Blanketing All Sections of Torrance plus Lomita, Harbor City and Adjacent City and County Areas

Torrance Herald

Phone
FA 8-4000

Published Monday and Thursday—
Entered as second class matter Jan. 30, 1914, at postoffice, Torrance, California, under act of March 3, 1879.

OFFICE AND PLANT AT 1619 GRAMERCY AVE., TORRANCE

42nd Year—No. 9 12

TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA, MONDAY, JANUARY 30, 1956

CIRCULATION OFFICE FA 8-4004

10¢ per copy

12 PAGES

REFINERY EXPANSION TOLD DURING PRESIDENT'S VISIT

New Cracking Unit Revealed

Plans for the expansion of the General Petroleum Refinery by the addition of a new \$7,500,000 gasoline cracking unit were revealed here Saturday by President R. L. Minckler, president of General Petroleum.

Funds for the multimillion dollar expansion have been budgeted, but no starting date has been set, President Minckler said.

Minckler revealed the plans to the HERALD Saturday during an inspection tour of the refinery with A. L. Nickerson, president of Socony Mobil Oil Co., parent organization of General Petroleum.

At the same time, it was revealed that the refinery had compiled a total of more than 250,000,000 man-hours in the plant since the last time lost accident—a new record at the local industry.

Amazed by Growth
Nickerson was making his first visit to the local plant in five years, and was astonished with the growth in the Torrance and Los Angeles area. He

said the Mobilgas and other Mobil products were enjoying record sales in the West, and "was growing right along with California."

After touring the plant here, the party inspected the harbor terminals, and then went to Santa Fe Springs to inspect production facilities.

Following their visit to Santa Fe Springs, it was announced that General Petroleum had a new discovery well there which had found oil in deeper strata than had been found previously.

"This could mean that there is a whole new oil field under the one that we have been working for years in that area," Minckler said.

Higher Octane
Elaborating on the expansion plans for the Torrance refinery, Minckler said that a new Sovo-former would be erected on the refinery site. The new catalytic reformer will permit the production of higher octane gasoline, he said.

Production at the refinery will be stepped up about 10,000 barrels a day in the near future, Minckler announced. With present production running nearly 90,000 barrels a day, the new rates will approach 100,000 barrels a day, Refinery Manager A. E. Thompson said.

Others visiting the refinery Saturday with Nickerson and Minckler included T. P. Simpson, vice president and director of manufacturing for General Petroleum; R. E. Lauterback, manager of manufacturing; C. M. Reading, manager of engineering; and F. C. King, assistant manager of the refinery.

Two Sisters Attacked Here

Two sisters, one 15, the other 13, were reportedly attacked Friday night by two men, one of whom was apparently apprehended by Torrance police.

The girls said they were criminally assaulted in the Torrance area, but details of the attacks were not completed by police Saturday. One of the attacks took place near 203rd St. and Arlington Ave., a juvenile officer said.

One of the suspects was being detained in Torrance City Jail Saturday, authorities said, while juvenile officers were working to complete their investigation of the attacks.



HIGHWAY REPAIRS BEGIN... State crews begin digging down for Pacific Coast Hwy. in front of the Walteria Post Office after tons of soil washed onto the roadway all but

halted traffic Thursday and Friday. One car was nearly buried in the deep sand on the roadway and several had to be towed from the area during the two days.

Pair Abduct Man On Local Street

Detectives are seeking a pair of knife-wielding men who kidnaped, robbed and beat a local shoe merchant late Friday after forcing their way into his car at 180th St. and Crenshaw Blvd.

Police say that Lloyd Allen Merry, 42, of 5205 McCallan St., South Gate, who works in a shoe store at 3017 W. 174th St., told Norwalk sheriff's deputies about the ordeal late Friday night.

He said he was driving south on Crenshaw Blvd., when he stopped at 180th St. for a signal. Two men came across the street, both with knives, and forced their way into his car, saying, "move over, we're getting in."

Drive to Fields
The victim said one of the men got behind the wheel of his car and the other sat on the outside. The suspects drove him east on 190th, past Normandie Ave., where they stopped in an area that was surrounded by fields. He told authorities that they went through his wallet and took \$57 in cash and then beat him and kicked him.

They asked him where the rest of the money was, he said. Merry told authorities he usually takes store receipts to the bank on Friday but that was not the case that day. It was when he failed to come up with any more money that they began beating him, he said.

Go On to Norwalk
Merry said he was groggy from the beating but that the two put him back in the car and drove to the Norwalk area, where they stopped again. He said they assaulted him again and then took his car keys and tossed them away. They then left on foot, the victim said.

He told authorities he turned the car's headlights on and finally found the ignition keys. He then drove to the Norwalk Sheriff's station and told his story.

Deputies notified Torrance officials of the kidnap-robbery, according to police reports here.

Ambulance Drivers Aid Stork Arrival

Two Wright's ambulance attendants aided the stork early Saturday morning when they sped to 174th St. and Crenshaw Blvd. to help deliver a baby that just couldn't wait until she got to a hospital to make her debut.

Charley Dusart and Larry Colley answered a call from police that Mrs. Frank J. Johnson, of 18720 Fonthill, was giving birth to a baby in a car behind the North Torrance Post Office. Johnson called police shortly after midnight and asked for assistance—in a hurry.

Dusart and Colley helped deliver the baby, a girl, and rushed mother and daughter to Harbor General Hospital. They said both were doing great.

The two ambulance men said Saturday morning it was the first time they had assisted with a delivery while working for Wright's. But both said they had been called to help the stork arrive "about 10" times before.

Four Injured In Traffic

Four persons were hurt in a traffic crash Friday afternoon at Carson St. and Ellinwood Dr., according to police reports.

Taken to Harbor General Hospital with injuries were Steve T. Perry, 35; Steve L. Perry, 5; and Sandy Prewatt, 31, all of San Pedro. A fourth injured party, Howard W. Hirdler, 25, of Wilmington, was taken to Torrance Emergency Medical.

Wright's and South Bay ambulances answered the call after the accident.

Police reports indicate that Hirdler, who was driving one of the vehicles, was attempting a left turn on Carson when his car and a vehicle driven by Steve T. Perry collided.

Groundbreaking For New Center Delayed a Week

Ground breaking ceremonies for the new multi-million dollar South Bay Shopping Center at 174th and Hawthorne, originally scheduled for 11:30 a.m. today have been postponed one week.

It was announced Saturday by Robert Adler, manager. Civic personalities of Torrance and surrounding communities will attend the event, heralded as one of the most important commercial milestones in the history of the area. A huge May Co. store will key-stone the shopping center which eventually will have more than 30 stores and a recreation center. The project is under the supervision of the Brody Investment Co. of Beverly Hills.

Man Dies From 3-Year Old Injury

A Lawndale man who suffered a brain injury while working in a plant here more than three years ago died Thursday afternoon at Torrance Memorial Hospital.

Funeral services are pending at a Hawthorne mortuary for Matthew Valko, 49, of 4132 W. 162nd St., who succumbed to an injury he received while working at the Ideco plant in May, 1952. The plant since has pulled out of this area.

Local authorities said the man was hit on the head and lay in a coma for a short time after the accident. He was transferred to a Long Beach hospital and placed under the care of a brain specialist.

The victim was readmitted to Torrance Memorial Hospital in November of last year, but grew steadily worse, authorities said.

Complete details of the accident were not available, since the plant has moved its operations and records to Texas.

Water Recedes; Evacuees Home

Torrance was digging out over the week end after what most agree was the worst storm in the history of the city inundated large areas and drove scores of families from their homes.

As of Saturday, all evacuees had returned to their homes or to the homes of relatives. Beginning early Thursday morning, however, more than 140 persons which represented half a hundred families were brought into an emergency disaster center set up in the American Legion Hall, 1109 Borden Ave.

During the rampaging storm, Governor Knight declared Torrance a disaster area and ordered out the National Guard to aid city and Red Cross forces in evacuating flood-stricken residential areas.

Area Hit Hard
Hardest hit was the area west of Crenshaw in north Torrance centering around 168th St. and Elgar. The homes throughout the area were inundated as the Dominguez Channel, county flood control project, proved inadequate to carry off the storm waters accumulating from a rain which measured 8.53 inches in about 36 hours.

Other areas evacuated included the 18th and Crenshaw residential district and several residential areas east of Torrance as far as Dominguez.

Rescue teams which included the Guard, city police officers, reserve police officers, members of the Torrance Mounted Police, and volunteers numbering into the hundreds moved into the flooded areas and assisted families in getting out of their homes by boat and truck. Evacuation operations began about 5 a.m. Thursday, after it had rained hard all night and the water began reaching perilous levels in the residential streets.

Life Guards Help
During Thursday morning, members of the County life guard crew moved into the north Torrance area in an effort to relieve the blocked channel just east of Crenshaw near 168th St. Divers went into the raging torrents and hooked chains onto logs, fences, and other material which was blocking the channel and pulled much of the debris out. Water began receding in the area south of the channel immediately.

In the meantime, the heavy downpour proved the first real test of the city's Civil Defense disaster program.

Early Thursday morning the disaster plan went into effect, with the control center set up at City Hall. City Manager George Stevens and George Powell, director and assistant director respectively of Civil Defense here, swung into action about 5 a.m.

Phones Opened
By that time a special switchboard had been set up and calls offering assistance to evacuated families were being handled with rapidity. Powell said it was impossible to accurately measure the number of individuals and groups who called offering assistance, in the form of shelter, food, clothing, vehicles and other badly needed help.

Amateur radio operators, which numbered 10 at the height of disaster proceedings, were notified and came from as far away as El Segundo to help. Reserves Called
Traffic control and evacuation aid was established by the police department, who called out 23 of the police reserve members to take part, including nine mounted police. Police also used walkie-talkie equipment in keeping constant contact with themselves, evacuees, and other persons in need of assistance, and disaster headquarters at City Hall.

By this time the shelter program went into effect, with centers located at the American Legion Hall, Moose Lodge, Civic Auditorium, Nativity Church Annex, and Methodist Church. But only the Legion Hall was used during the assistance program. Red Cross officials were notified and they immediately sent out crews to aid in the feeding and sheltering of some of the victims.

And the Fire Department also was called out in force. Firemen aided police and other authorities in general mopping up and help for the needy. The firemen, too, used walkie-talkies whenever possible.

Two Injured as Slick Pavement Causes Crashes
Traffic crashes injured two people in Torrance Thursday as wet brakes and slick pavements caused many a fender to bump another in the worst rain-storm in years.

Six-year-old Ruston Lou Betsinger, of 247 Calle de Madrid, was treated at Pacific Medical Center for injuries received in a two-car crash Thursday morning.

Police reports indicate that a 1954 Buick driven by Robert Betsinger, of 247 Calle de Madrid, and Blondina Lou Van Volkenburg, 28, of 113 Calle de Arboles, collided shortly after 9 a.m. at Via Colusa and Via Sevilla.

A Redondo man, David G. Perras, 24, was taken to Harbor General Hospital with injuries after vehicles driven by Huffine H. Burke, 59, of 24434 Ward St., and Delgado R. Gutierrez, 24, of Redondo, were involved in a collision Thursday night at Colton Avenue and Lomita Blvd.

The injured man reportedly suffered minor hurts.

Police said the brakes of the Gutierrez car went out and the vehicle ran a stop sign and crashed into the other vehicle. Burke's car was southbound on Hawthorne and the Gutierrez auto was going west on Lomita at the time of the mishap, police said.

Rain Fell in Torran(t)ce

BY MILDRED HUNT

Mother Nature was putting on a show—a real show, some would like to say—ring circus with the same split-second timing. The scene was Torrance and the star performer was the rain. Acting in supporting roles were the Civil Defense, Police, Red Cross, National Guard, Frog Men, and County Life Guards.

The scene opened on what appeared to be a seasonal rain fall. Raincoats, umbrellas, and the usual foot covering were the costumes worn by the performers. Then there was a change of scene and the gentle rain turned into solid cellophane-like sheets—sheets with ragged hems. Darkness fell. The audience became fearful and some wept, but the show went on.

Liquid sunshine filled the streets and turned many of them into Venice-like canals. Gondolas appeared in the form of rubber-life rafts. Ducks, turned loose by the swirling waters, quacked in glee as they cavorted in the surging liquid, going places they had never been before. It was their day and they were making the most of it. Surely, they reasoned, the rain had come just for them.

As the third act opens, the water flooding the streets was not content to remain in such a dormant role but ex-

tended its performance into homes—to compete with television. Floors became covered with the swirling stuff and furniture began to take French leave.

Then, as though by magic, there appeared on the scene groups of supporting performers who went into intensive action.

They wore costumes of white helmets, blue uniforms, work clothes with Reserve Officer insignias, steel helmets, and some with scant clothing and rubber fins on their feet.

Another group wearing a m band marked with a Red Cross, made ready the American Legion Hall on Borden Ave. by furnishing food, blankets, and other necessary items. These supporting actors were stealing the show.

They begin to rescue their audience which had been caught in a trap by the villain of the show, the rain. George Powell, Civil Defense head, directed the show much in the same manner as a sea fearing captain shouting orders to his men for life boats on a sinking ship.

Mother Nature seeing that the show was coming to a close, gave her supporting cast a warm, sunny smile of appreciation. Lights went on and the audience emerged to return gratefully to a normal existence. The play had ended.



ON REFINERY TOUR... A. R. Nickerson (left), president of Socony Mobil Oil Co.; R. L. Minckler (center), president of General Petroleum Corp., and Refinery Manager A. E. Thompson, check map of the refinery before starting out on inspection tour Saturday. Minckler announced a huge expansion plan during his visit here.